

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Arizona Fishery Resources Offices Pinetop, Parker, San Carlos, Flagstaff

DATE: December 19, 2002
REPORT FOR: **November 2002**
DCN: USFWS-AZFRO-PT-03-003
ACTIVITIES:

General

Chris Cantrell and Marshall Stephens completed their Student Conservation Association volunteer internships. They helped us accomplish a lot of work. They were definitely assets to our station and they will be missed. Thanks and good luck guys.

AZFRO Biologists participated in our annual work plan meeting. Our goal for the meeting is to identify priorities for the coming year, to evaluate project merits and methodologies, and to coordinate efforts among AZFRO offices. As part of this year's meeting, we developed criteria to rank projects to assist us in setting our priorities. Potential projects for 2003 have been ranked and the rankings will be discussed on a follow-up conference call in December.

Stewart Jacks participated in a Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission Meeting held in Albuquerque. The Commission is formulating bylaws to incorporate in their quest to find additional resources for Tribal fishery programs.

Rob Simmonds participated in a meeting with personnel from the RO (Regional Office), AESO (Arizona Ecological Services Field Office), Willow Beach NFH, and Dexter NFH&TC to discuss issues relating to Colorado River endangered fish management.

Jacks participated in the PF&W (Partners for Fish and Wildlife) Program project ranking meeting with Marty Jakle (Arizona PF&W Coordinator). There were some excellent proposals submitted that should accomplish some great habitat restoration work.

Leslie Thompson completed AZFRO's FY02 Volunteer Report. In FY02 volunteers contributed >6,550 hours to AZFRO to help us accomplish our mission.

Jacks participated in a meeting in Albuquerque to develop a Service based training course for HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). The HACCP process is a way for field stations to minimize the spread of invasive species. Bob Pitman (R2 ANS Coordinator) hosted the meeting which included June McIlwain (NCTC) and representatives from R2 Fisheries, R4 Fisheries, Ecological Services, Refuges, Federal Aid, and AGFD (Arizona Game and Fish Department).

Mark Brouder participated in the Western Division AFS EXCOM Retreat in Salt Lake City, UT and the Western Division AFS 2003 Planning Committee teleconference. Brenda Brouder continued preparations for the printed program for the Western Division AFS meeting coming up in April 2003 and also participated in the Planning Committee teleconference.

Jacks submitted AZFRO's FY03 Annual Work Plan to Jennifer Fowler-Propst (R2 Fisheries Supervisor) for approval.

Outreach

Chuck Minckley attended the 34th annual Desert Fishes Council meeting in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. He gave a talk entitled "High Levee Pond, A Native Fish Habitat Along the Lower Colorado River" coauthored by Mitch Thorson (AZFRO), G. Mueller & J. Carpenter (USGS).

Pam Sponholtz provided an overview of the mission and vision of the Service and AZFRO to a Master Watershed Stewardship training sponsored by the University of Arizona. The presentation also included specific examples of AZFRO's activities within Arizona and in the Verde River Watershed.

AZFRO-Pinetop

The Pinetop staff participated in the Fishery Coordination meeting among AZFRO, AWC NFH (Alchesay/Williams Creek NFH), Pinetop FHC, & WMAT-WORD (White Mountain Apache Tribe - Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division). B. Brouder gave an update on the progress and findings of WMAT Recreational Fishing Program study.

Mary Jo Stegman completed the Biological Opinion on the BIA's proposed Rodeo-Chediski Wildfire Salvage Timber Harvest Operations on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. This was a major undertaking with a short deadline.

Leslie Ruiz & Jacks participated in a conference call with U.S. Forest Service, AGFD, WMAT-WORD, and Old Pueblo Trout Unlimited regarding a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant proposal for Apache trout recovery work. This is an opportunity for the agencies involved in Apache trout recovery to combine efforts and requests for monies to help pay for the work needed to accomplish our recovery goal.

Daniel Parker, with Marshall Stephens and Chris Cantrell, completed the Soldier Spring Apache trout population survey. This survey is part of a range wide survey of Apache trout populations.

B. Brouder completed relative stock density analysis and review of FAIR draft management plans, and began finalizing draft of WMAT Recreational Fishing Program study report.

Ruiz coordinated stocking of surplus rainbow trout from AGFD's Canyon Creek hatchery. These fish were stocked on the FAIR. Thanks to AGFD for making these fish available.

Stegman worked with the AESO and the Hopi Tribe on completion of a Biological Opinion on The Hopi Tribe's Water Quality Standards.

B. Brouder met with Tim Gatewood (WORD Tribal Fishery Biologist) to discuss WMAT Recreational Fishing Program study findings and tribal expectation of the forth-coming report.

Ruiz put together a summary of the involvement of the PF&W Program in Apache trout recovery. She submitted the briefing to Mike McCollum (Regional PF&W Coordinator).

Tom Ensman and Parker, with assistance from WMAT-WORD, stocked 10,000 channel catfish on the FAIR.

Stegman completed an informal Section 7 consultation for the Hopi Tribe on the construction of the Second Mesa Day School and provided two species lists to the Hopi Tribe for the installation of buried telephone lines and the First Mesa Scattered Housing Projects.

Ruiz met with Mike Lopez (AGFD) regarding Apache trout recovery implementation.

Stegman reviewed and met with the Fort Apache BIA's Biological Assessment on their proposed Timber Hauling on U.S. Forest Roads for timber from the Rodeo-Chediski Wildfire.

Ruiz continued work on the Apache trout population status report.

Stegman completed AZFRO's State Scientific Collecting Permit Application and Annual Report.

AZFRO-Parker

Mitch Thorson conducted the water quality projects at Alamo and Painted Rock reservoirs. Both reservoirs are still very low.

Regional Director Dale Hall, Pete Stine (RO Fisheries), Jenni Walters and Karen Welsh (RO Fisheries Budget), the AZFRO-Parker staff, and Jacks attended the Lake Havasu Fisheries Improvement Project dedication. This project has been ongoing for 10+ years and involves a large number of agencies and thousands of hours of volunteer work. As part of the dedication 2,118 PIT-tagged bonytail from Dexter NFH&TC, and hauled by Inks Dam NFH staff, were stocked into the lake.

Doug Jann sampled Beal Lake at the Havasu NWR to evaluate the condition of 10,000 fingerling razorback suckers that were stocked in the spring of 2002 as part of the Native Fish Protected Habitats program. Multiple days of electrofishing and trammel netting did not capture any razorbacks. However, five other species of fish were found, including carp, green sunfish, bluegill, yellow bullhead, and threadfin shad.

Minckley assisted personnel from Arizona State University, BOR (Bureau of Reclamation), Nevada Division of Wildlife, and Willow Beach NFH in sampling Lake Mojave for razorback suckers.

Jann assisted AZFRO-Pinetop staff in Apache trout population surveys in Soldier Springs (FAIR).

AZFRO-Parker assisted Willow Beach NFH with the stocking of 2,000 PIT-tagged bonytail into Lake Havasu.

Jann assisted the U.S. Geological Survey in electrofishing at Cibola High Levee Pond, at the Cibola NWR, as part of a population analysis of razorback suckers and bonytail chub.

Jann began the first monthly evaluation of the renovation of the Imperial NWR Ducks Unlimited ponds, which were renovated in October 2002 as part of the Native Fish Protected Habitats program. The monthly evaluation will be completed the first week of December 2002.

AZFRO-San Carlos

Dewey Wesley conducted water quality measurements and angler surveys at several SCAR (San Carlos Apache Reservation) lakes. Part of this survey work was for preparation of channel catfish stocking on the SCAR.

M. Brouder met with Loretta Stone (Tribal EPA), Stephen Johnson (Water Quality Technology, Inc.), and Terry Geiselman (Water Quality Technology, Inc.) to discuss establishing point source pollution monitoring sites and future monitoring of water quality on Bonita Creek (SCAR). Wesley assisted with locating three potential sites along the creek.

The RO is in the process of reviewing and finalizing AZFRO's Draft Biological Opinion that Stegman completed on the BOR's purchase of Central Arizona Project water for the San Carlos Apache Tribe in lieu of retaining water in San Carlos Reservoir.

M. Brouder and Wesley, with assistance from SCA volunteers Marshall Stephens and Chris Cantrell, sampled Point of Pines and Seneca lakes (SCAR) as per the trout overwinter/survival study plan.

Wesley and M. Brouder, with assistance from the San Carlos Recreation & Wildlife Department, stocked 10,000 channel catfish on the SCAR.

M. Brouder continued preparation of manuscript "Effects of dam operations on largemouth bass."

Wesley assisted AZFRO-Flagstaff with data entry from recent LCR (Little Colorado River) native fish surveys.

M. Brouder continued work on development of the AZFRO Standardized Sampling Protocol.

Wesley and M. Brouder worked with AGFD to stock surplus brown trout from a state hatchery into Point of Pines Lake (SCAR). Thanks to AGFD for making these fish available.

AZFRO-Flagstaff

Sponholtz reviewed and commented on "Piscivory by Non-Native Salmonids in the Colorado River and an Evaluation of the Efficacy of Mechanical Removal of Non-Native Salmonids" being developed by the GCMRC (Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center).

Randy Van Haverbeke and Dennis Stone participated in a mainstem Colorado River fishery monitoring trip. This trip was conducted at the conclusion of the October LCR survey. The purpose of the trip was to set hoopnets along nearshore habitat in order to monitor the abundance of humpback chub. This is one trip out of several being performed by GCMRC this year in order to estimate the rate of disappearance for young of the year and juvenile humpback chub once they are displaced out of the Little Colorado River by flooding events.

Sponholtz worked with the AESO-Flagstaff to coordinate comments on the Arizona Public Services's submission of Fossil Creek information to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Van Haverbeke updated OAS website details for the B-3 (Combination Airplane/Helicopter Safety Class) he taught in October and sent class evaluations to Rick Johnson at OAS in Phoenix.

Sponholtz continued work on the Navajo Nation Stream and Reservoir Report.

AZFRO-Flagstaff personnel entered LCR fishery data from the October survey.

Van Haverbeke combined and analyzed LCR 2002 data from September and October fishery survey trips and completed the 2002 Fall Trip Report and submitted it to GCMRC.

Stone worked on the results from the baiting experiment that was conducted during the October 2002 LCR survey trip. The preliminary results show that accessible baiting significantly improves humpback chub catch rates over non-baiting and scent baiting (i.e., bait was inaccessible to fish) during the first two hauls. There is also a significant decline in overall catch related to haul.

Van Haverbeke continued work on analyzing data and writing the 2002 LCR Native Fish Monitoring Final Report.

R. Simmonds outlined a proposal for a feasibility study of captive propagation of humpback chub and discussed the proposal with AZFRO-Flagstaff and Dexter NFH&TC staff. The proposal is being developed at the request of the GCMRC.

Training

Jacks completed Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility training in Albuquerque. This was training for every program and field station in Region 2.

Ruiz completed online SPSS software training.